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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 08 MOSCOW 001331

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SUBJECT: START FOLLOW-ON DISCUSSIONS, OPENING SESSION,
MOSCOW, MAY 19, 2009

REF: A. STATE 50910

[1](#)B. MOSCOW 3720

Classified By: Ambassador John R. Beyrle. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (S) SUMMARY: During the first meeting between the United States and Russian Delegations to conclude a START Follow-on Treaty, the Russian Delegation reiterated that Russia's approach was provided to the United States in its Aide Memoire, dated December 15, 2008. The Russian Delegation also made clear that Russia desired to include a specific link between strategic offensive forces and strategic defensive systems in the new treaty. The Russian Delegation stated that in all previous offensive arms limitation and reduction treaties, there had been at least reference to this relationship in the preamble to each Treaty, including START. Although the ABM Treaty no longer existed and it would not be possible to refer to it in the START Follow-on Treaty, the Russian side wanted to ensure that there was some reference to the relationship in the upcoming treaty. The U.S. Delegation recognized Russia's concerns regarding missile defense, but reminded the Russian Delegation that the missile defense issue would be the focus of discussions that would take place in another forum; the United States and Russia should focus only on the START follow-on Treaty during the Moscow meetings.

[1](#)2. (S) The U.S. Delegation provided the Russian Federation with the text of the U.S. non-paper on the Elements for a START Follow-on Treaty, and briefly explained each of the paper's sections. The Russian Delegation's initial reaction to the non-paper was to observe that there was no mention of a specific number for either "operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads" (ODSNW) or delivery vehicles. The U.S. Delegation explained that one of the U.S. objectives for the on-going U.S. Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) was to arrive at a recommendation for the number of ODSNW, which would also affect the number of launchers, that would ultimately become a part of the START Follow-on Treaty. They anticipated that these numbers would be available in June. The afternoon session concentrated on the inclusion of ICBMs and SLBMs in the follow-on agreement, how to record the relationship between strategic offensive and defense forces, and the departure of U.S. equipment and personnel from the Votkinsk perimeter portal monitoring facility. The Russian delegation questioned why the U.S. proposed verification provisions for ICBMs and SLBMs if ICBMs and SLBMs were not going to be limited in the new treaty, and the U.S. was not going to use the maximum number of warheads for these missiles as a counting method. The Russian Delegation questioned the use of operationally deployed strategic nuclear warhead (ODSNW) as a method of accounting and noted

Russian concerns about the U.S. ability to upload those missiles using nuclear warheads currently in storage. May 20 Session, Russian non-papers, and delegation lists reported septel. End summary.

Opening Session - Pleasantries Abound

13. (S) Russian Head of Delegation (HOD) Anatoliy Antonov opened the first meeting of the START Follow-on negotiations by reviewing the U.S./Russian Federation Presidential Statement of April 1, 2009 in London, and the charge contained in it to reduce and limit strategic offensive arms to levels below the Moscow Treaty limits before START expired on December 5, 2009. Antonov called for the Delegations to engage in frank and honest discussion that would not conceal existing problems (and added there were a lot of them), but the focus of the work was to ensure strategic stability of both sides.

14. (S) U.S. HOD Assistant Secretary of State for Verification, Compliance and Implementation, Rose Gottemoeller, responded in her opening comments that both Presidents have high expectations for the work of each delegation. She expressed hope that the negotiations could build on the constructive discussions that had taken place in Rome on April 24 and in Washington on May 6, 2009. She proposed that each delegation adopt two watchwords for the work ahead, "reset" and "overload." That is, the nations need to "reset" the relationship while the delegations also

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needed to be mindful of the effects of being "overloaded" with the amount of work ahead of us. Gottemoeller provided the U.S. non-paper on Elements of a START Follow-on Agreement (Ref A).

15. (S) Antonov said the Russian Delegation would carefully study the U.S. Elements non-paper and expanding on Gottemoeller's watch words, he believed that by the use of the term "reset," each delegation needed to move from words to actions. He also believed that the delegations should not get "overloaded" and sink the common boat with work. However, he offered that the Russian side was prepared to work 25 hours a day to achieve the goal expressed by the two Presidents, to reach an agreement by December 5, 2009.

The World Is Watching

16. (S) Antonov noted that at the recent Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) preparatory conference in New York, many of the participating nations expressed the hope that the efforts by the United States and Russia on START Follow-on would help to solve problems in the NPT. However, he was not ready to allow the negotiations to be taken hostage by the NPT community. Both sides needed to tread carefully and to treat each other with respect, listen to each others' words and take into account the concerns expressed by each party.

Procedural Discussion

17. (S) Antonov laid out Russia's proposed schedule for this negotiating session as well as the Russian Delegation's general idea for how the overall negotiations should proceed. Antonov stated he was flexible on the overall length of the first session and thought it could be accomplished in two days instead of three, but was willing to see how the meetings progressed. Speaking of the overall negotiations, he observed that while the majority of the discussions should take place in plenary meetings, it would also be important to have working groups meet so that the subject matter experts

could explore selected topics further. Antonov also encouraged the Parties to exchange position papers and non-papers as needed as a way to better explain positions of the sides in greater detail.

¶8. (S) Antonov cautioned that the sides should be careful not to release information to the news media about the progress of the negotiations; the deliberations should be kept "strictly confidential." He proposed that at the end of each session, both sides could agree on a joint press release.

¶9. (S) Antonov stated his preference for holding future START Follow-on sessions in Geneva. He requested that the U.S. and Russian Missions in Geneva work jointly with the Swiss government authorities to obtain visas for the delegations in order to prevent anticipated visa problems with the Swiss. Gottemoeller said that the U.S. would assist in any way that it could to facilitate the meetings in Geneva.

¶10. (S) Regarding the meetings scheduled for the first week of June, Gottemoeller informed the Russian Delegation that since June 1, 2009, was a Swiss holiday, there could be problems with getting appropriate support from the respective missions. Antonov, while acknowledging respect for holidays, dismissed these concerns and said that the Russian Delegation was willing to direct its mission to support the talks and offered to host the meetings on June 1. Antonov said it was Russia's desire to stick to the schedule of holding the talks from June 1-3, 2009 in Geneva as previously agreed.

The Russian Approach

¶11. (S) Antonov stated that the Russian positions for the START Follow-on Agreement were contained in its Aide-Memoire of December 15, 2008 (Ref B), which provided Russia's official response to the former administration's Post-START proposal of October 2008. Antonov expressed Russia's desire to find compromise wording between the U.S. Non-Paper and the Russian Aide-Memoire as a way to find common terminology so

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that each side's positions could evolve. He stated that Russia believed that the new treaty should be legally binding, contain limits on delivery vehicles and be verifiable. It should also include START's ban on basing strategic arms outside of national territory and address the global security concerns of both sides by linking the levels of Strategic Offensive Arms (SOA) with the level of strategic defenses. He noted that the Preamble to START referenced its linkage to Article XI of the ABM Treaty. Antonov stated that it was a matter of principal for Russia that the new treaty should attach importance to the strategic offense/defense relationship.

¶12. (S) Antonov referenced Russian President Medvedev's Helsinki speech in which Medvedev emphasized the importance of continuing the ban on nuclear weapons in outer space and the "unacceptability" of converting strategic nuclear missiles into missiles that deliver non-nuclear warheads. Antonov stated that the new treaty needed to relate to START in order to preserve the continuity and consistency already developed in that treaty.

¶13. (S) Antonov said that the Russian Delegation would consider both the U.S. non-paper provided by Gottemoeller and the documents that were provided in Rome on April 24, 2009 and would provide the Russian response in Geneva. He also stated that Russia would be providing its own documents to the U.S. side at that time. Antonov noted that it was too early to discuss the format for the report to the Presidents, but believed that it should reflect the results of the discussions.

U.S. Response and Russian Sword Fighting

¶14. (S) Gottemoeller acknowledged that she understood the Russian position regarding the linkage between SOA and strategic defensive systems, but referenced the April 1 Joint Statement in specifying that missile defense talks would take place separately. She informed Antonov that U.S. Ambassador John Beyrle would be meeting with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Ryabkov that afternoon to present U.S. non-papers for the following week's discussions.

¶15. (S) Gottemoeller reminded Antonov that the goal of these negotiations was to focus like a "laser light" on reaching a START follow-on agreement by the end of this year. The U.S. position was that there would be a separate forum to discuss strategic defensive matters. Antonov stated he understood Gottemoeller, but said that Russia believed that it was important to retain a link between strategic offensive and defensive arms. He asserted that delinking the two issues would be difficult and added that if we did not tackle the missile defense issue, we would not be able to resolve the issues of strategic offensive arms. Antonov said the issue of the linkage between offense and defense was like two soldiers fighting with swords. As long as both swords were of equal length, it would be a fair fight. If one of the soldiers had a shield, then the other must find another means of regaining equality, perhaps by having a longer sword. Antonov promised a paper on Russia's position for linking strategic offense and defense.

U.S. Non-Paper and Russian Questions

¶16. (S) While reviewing the U.S. non-paper in its entirety, Gottemoeller highlighted the fact that the U.S. proposal was based on a hybrid of the START and Moscow treaties. The U.S. approach follows the Moscow Treaty by including an aggregate limit on ODSNW, and is similar to START in its inclusion of an overall limit on deployed launchers of ICBMs and SLBMs and on Heavy Bombers.

¶17. (S) Antonov welcomed the new U.S. proposal on elements for the START Follow on Treaty but expressed confusion over some "missing elements" within the U.S. non-paper. He asked whether the United States was prepared to propose a specific number for the aggregate limit on ODSNW. He said that Russia would study the document and prepare an official response in time for the Geneva discussions. He noted that the document did not include a linkage between strategic offense and

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defense, and that he did not see a limitation on delivery vehicles. He also asked whether the role of non-nuclear weapons that was contained in U.S. non-paper should be a part of these discussions. The Russian side questioned whether the low end of the treaty duration contained in the U.S. proposal (5 years) would be appropriate, and stated that Russia's ratification process for the Treaty could take five years. He said that he was not saying "no" to the shorter duration, but wanted to discuss it further.

¶18. (S) Gottemoeller acknowledged the absence of specific numbers associated with the limit of ODSNW in the non-paper, and a limit on the number of launchers. She stated that the United States was working on developing these numbers in the context of our on-going Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). She then asked Dr. Ted Warner to provide an explanation of the U.S. NPR process. Dr. Warner noted the current progress of the U.S. interagency efforts to develop the congressionally-mandated NPR report and expressed the hope that the United States would be able to propose limits on the number of ODSNW, and on strategic delivery vehicles by no later than mid-June.

¶19. (S) Antonov asked whether there would be three categories of limits; ODSNW, launchers and delivery vehicles, or only two categories. As contained in the U.S. proposal, Dr. Warner answered there would be two limits.

¶20. (S) General Yevgeniy Buzhinskiy requested a clarification of the phrase "small number of spares" in the U.S. non-paper.

Gottemoeller replied the U.S. would provide a better explanation as to the definition of permitted spares and how they would be handled. She also stated that the delegations needed to discuss the non-nuclear strategic weapons issue and that the United States was open to a variety of options and would be interested in receiving Russian proposals. Buzhinskiy followed up with a question about Paragraph B in the U.S. non paper, specifically why some launchers would not be included in the treaty, but that in paragraph D those same launchers would be subject to verification. He asked why the Parties should verify launchers of non-nuclear strategic weapons if they were not in the treaty. Gottemoeller replied that verification would allow both sides to confirm that the warheads were not nuclear. She also discussed that in paragraph B it should also be mentioned that some systems were no longer capable of launching ICBMs and were no longer part of the operational forces. Buzhinskiy responded that if the launchers were permanently eliminated, couldn't the U.S. just spend money to convert them back into operational launchers. He requested more details and further discussion on converted or derelict strategic offensive systems.

¶21. (S) Koshelev asked about the fate of the Moscow Treaty (SORT). In response, Brown delivered the following points:
--The decision of how to deal with SORT will depend in part upon the specific formulations of the reductions, definitions, and other provisions of the START Follow-on Treaty.

--Based on the content of those provisions, there are several options that could be considered on how to deal with SORT when the START Follow-on Treaty comes into force.

-- As was the case for the interrelationship between the START-II and START treaties, the START Follow-on Treaty could be considered to be a further development of the SORT reductions, as well as a substitute for the verification procedures of START that are expiring in December of this year.

-- In such a case, SORT would be viewed as an intermediate step in the START Follow-on Treaty reductions process, with the new START Follow-on Treaty verification procedures applied through December 31, 2012. SORT could also be extended to coincide with the duration of the START Follow-on Treaty, if desired.

-- As necessary, the START Follow-on Treaty could stipulate that it shall be considered to amend provisions in SORT that are incompatible with those in the START Follow-on Treaty.

-- Alternatively, the START Follow-on Treaty could stipulate that it shall be considered, in accordance with Article IV of SORT, as a subsequent agreement that supersedes SORT in its

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entirety, and SORT would terminate at entry into force of the START Follow-on Treaty.

--The U.S. side would be interested in hearing Russia's views on the fate of SORT as we engage in these negotiations.

¶22. (S) Antonov requested a copy of the U.S. talking points, if possible, so the Russian side could study them further.

Afternoon Session: Offensive/Defensive Link, Votkinsk

¶23. (S) In the afternoon session, the Russian delegation repeatedly returned to the subject of the relationship between strategic offensive and defensive forces, and the need to include a statement in the follow-on treaty on that relationship. Russia believes that there was a direct link between strategic offensive and defense forces, and that Russia could only consider decreasing its strategic offensive forces if it understood the size of U.S. missile defense forces.

¶24. (S) Antonov made very clear that Russia expected the U.S. to be out of the Votkinsk perimeter portal monitoring facility by the time START expires on December 5, 2009, irrespective of whether the U.S. signed the draft agreement currently being worked in the JCIC on the procedures for removing U.S. equipment and personnel from that facility. He wanted it clearly understood that Russia did not want the perimeter portal monitoring activities at Votkinsk continued under the START follow-on agreement and that Russia would not revisit its decision on this matter.

Press Interest

¶25. (S) Antonov requested coordination on a statement for release to the press regarding the first official meeting to negotiate a follow-on START Treaty. Antonov said there was a high degree of press interest in Moscow regarding these negotiations and the MFA wanted to release on Wednesday, May 20, a limited statement on the negotiations. Antonov gave Gottemoeller a draft press release for consideration by the US delegation.

Russian Comments on Non-Paper

¶26. (S) Streltsov stated that the principal difference between the US position in the "Elements" document and the START Treaty was that the subject of the START Treaty was warheads and delivery vehicles while the subject of the Elements document was warheads and launchers. Therefore, it appeared that ICBMs and SLBMs were outside the purview of the U.S. proposal for the new treaty. Streltsov then questioned why there were verifications measures for ICBMs and SLBMs if there were no limits on ICBMs and SLBMs. Why did the U.S. need ICBM and SLBM production and movement notifications if the ballistic missiles were not limited? Why was there a need for telemetry provisions if there was no consideration of the maximum warhead capability of ICBMs and SLBMs? He summarized by asking why there was a need for verification measures on ICBMs and SLBMs when the United States was not including them in its proposal? Gottemoeller responded that the U.S. approach was a hybrid of the START and Moscow Treaties, and that the U.S. delegation would present additional details later.

¶27. (S) Streltsov added that there must be a common understanding of what is meant by the term "warhead." The U.S. use of the term "operationally deployed strategic nuclear warhead (ODSNW)" was a unilateral definition not provided for in the Moscow Treaty but given to the U.S. Senate during ratification proceedings. The Moscow Treaty used strategic nuclear warhead, not ODSNW. He noted the START Treaty also had a definition for warheads. Streltsov said there must be an agreed definition of the term warhead, with respect to our commitment to decrease the number of warheads to less than the levels in the Moscow Treaty. Antonov indicated Russia would have additional questions

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about the U.S. Elements non-paper when the delegations met in Geneva on June 1. He added that Russia would present its own paper in Geneva.

¶28. (S) In order to better explain the U.S. proposal, Kurt Siemon drew upon U.S. talking points on the rationale for using verification measures to more closely correlate warheads and delivery vehicles.

-- The START Treaty's limit on attributed warheads was necessary for the times; however, by its nature the START counting rules resulted in an inflated count of warheads on deployed strategic offensive arms.

-- In the Moscow Treaty, the use of the "operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads" approach for counting warheads reflects the reality of how the United States and the Russian Federation actually deploy warheads within their strategic nuclear forces.

-- The U.S. approach in the START follow-on treaty is to combine the Moscow Treaty concept of limiting ODSNW with the START Treaty concept of an overall limit on delivery vehicles.

--This approach would eliminate the over-counting of strategic nuclear warheads caused by attributed warheads and would provide both parties with a more accurate insight into the other's strategic force structure, both with respect to deployed nuclear warheads, and deployed delivery vehicles and their operational potential.

-- Our experience in implementing the START Treaty convinces us that it is possible to effectively verify both of these limits.

-- The existing START procedures for declaring and verifying the number of launchers, deployed ICBMs, deployed SLBMs, and deployed heavy bombers could be carried forward with only minor modification.

-- The START procedures for re-entry vehicle inspections would have to be modified to provide for the confirmation of the actual number of nuclear warheads present on an ICBM or SLBM.

-- This may entail greater access to the front section of the missile, but with judicious shrouding and reasonable inspection procedures, confirmation of the actual number of nuclear warheads present could be achieved without compromising sensitive information.

-- Procedures for the use of radiation detection equipment to confirm that an object on the front section of an ICBM or SLBM is not a strategic nuclear warhead already exist in START, and could be adapted to a similar role under the START follow-on treaty with respect to confirming a non-nuclear warhead.

-- With respect to heavy bombers, provisions would have to be developed to declare and confirm the number of nuclear weapons for heavy bombers located in weapon storage areas that support heavy bomber air bases.

¶29. (S) Streltsov noted again that the U.S. Elements document had no notion of deployed ICBMs and SLBMs and wondered if in the U.S. view each side had the right to increase or decrease the number of reentry vehicles on missiles? Siemon responded that said each side would declare the actual number of warheads deployed on ICBMs and SLBMs. It was the U.S. view that the sides would have to develop verification measures to confirm those declarations.

¶30. (S) Streltsov responded that under the START Treaty each type of missile was attributed with a specified number of warheads. Did the U.S. believe there was a right to increase or decrease the warhead numbers of each type of ICBM and SLBM? He gave examples of Minuteman III with three or one warhead and the Trident with eight or four warheads. Antonov said that in such a situation one side should inform the other side. Gottemoeller added that the sides might consider some constraint on the capability to upload warheads.

Antonov said the problem for Russia was the capability of returning warheads in storage to the delivery vehicles. He asked how many nuclear warheads does the U.S. have in storage

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--1000, 2000, or 5000? The point was that, for example, Trident could have four empty warhead positions and then quickly upload those missiles. He followed up by asking if the ceiling were 1699 warheads, how many warheads would be in storage. Siemon acknowledged there were spare warheads at operational bases. He stated that the U.S. is prepared under the START follow-on treaty to declare the number and location of these spare nuclear warheads stored at operational heavy bomber bases, and to limit their number. He also said the U.S. is prepared to discuss and to reach agreement on procedures for verifying the number of such spare nuclear warheads. Gottemoeller said that the U.S. Delegation needed to study further the questions Russia had raised, and the U.S. would take them for homework and provide a response in Geneva.

Offense vs. Defense

¶31. (S) Antonov again raised the issue of the relationship between strategic offensive and defensive forces and said Russia would present a paper on Wednesday, May 20. He made the point that both sides needed equal security. This would be especially true as strategic offensive forces decreased in numbers. He noted that the Presidents had in their London statement agreed that there was a relationship between offensive and defensive forces. He noted both the START preamble and Article XI of the now defunct ABM Treaty included statements on the relationship between offensive and defense strategic forces, and that the U.S. needed to take into account Russian concerns.

¶32. (S) Gottemoeller responded that the U.S. delegation understood that Russia had great concern about missile defense, especially as the number of strategic offense arms decreases. However, as noted in London, there were two elements in the London statements. The first was only to decrease the number of strategic offensive arms and to deal with the replacement of the START Treaty. The second element covered many topics including security cooperation, and political and economic issues. It was in this second element that the sides had agreed to discuss missile defense. In that regard, she noted that Ambassador Stephen Mull was arriving in Moscow next week with a U.S. delegation to discuss missile defense.

¶33. (S) Antonov said that for Russia there was a direct link between reduction in strategic offense arms and U.S. missile defense. Russia considered things like the U.S. global Missile Defense, the European missile defense site, and Congressional funding. He made the point that the U.S. was asking for decreasing strategic offensive arms while increasing missile defense. This affected Russia's strategic forces. The key question for Russia was whether the U.S. recognized this interdependency and whether the U.S. was willing to register that relationship in the START follow-on agreement.

¶34. (S) Buzhinskiy added that he knew a U.S. delegation was coming to Moscow next week to talk about missile defense cooperation. Russia had heard about missile defense cooperation for seven years. However, the U.S. proposal on missile defense cooperation was only about Russia participating in the U.S.'s global missile defense system. Since the U.S. was now talking about decreasing strategic offense arms, Russia needed to know the specific number of missile defense missiles the U.S. intended to deploy. Russia needed this information to determine the number of strategic offense arms it required to maintain its deterrent forces

135. (S) Gottemoeller said she was not ready to discuss the larger issue of the relationship between offensive and defensive forces. However, as underscored by President Obama there was a link between the Iranian missile threat and U.S. missile defense, especially as related to the European missile defense site. She proposed that issue be an item of discussion for the missile defense talks the next week.

Votkinsk

136. (S) Regarding the exit of U.S. equipment and personnel

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from the Votkinsk perimeter portal monitoring facility, Antonov said Russia noted that the START Treaty would end on December 5, 2009 and, in accordance with the START Treaty, the Votkinsk perimeter portal monitoring facility would cease to exist. Therefore, all U.S. personnel and equipment must leave prior to December 5, 2009. He pointed out that at the last JCIC session, Russia had provided the U.S. with the final version of an agreement for the procedures for removing U.S. equipment from Votkinsk. In fact, the U.S. had agreed to sign the document at the next session of JCIC. This would give the U.S. six months to remove its equipment. Antonov said he wished to inform the U.S. that Russia did not envision inclusion of a Votkinsk perimeter portal monitoring facility in the START follow-on agreement. Antonov went on to question the need for a June JCIC session if the U.S. was not ready to sign the Votkinsk agreement. Gottemoeller responded that the U.S. was willing to pursue reciprocity for Russian on-site inspection which would be comparable to the Votkinsk facility. She also said there were other issues on the JCIC agenda to be dealt with besides the Votkinsk agreement. Antonov indicated Russia did not want reciprocity; what Russia wanted was for the U.S. to sign the Votkinsk agreement. He said the U.S. should not be under any illusion that Russia would revisit the issue of the closure of the Votkinsk perimeter portal monitoring facility.
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